

Chapter 5

Trapping Regulations



Content Standard - *Students demonstrate the ability to understand, support, and comply with trapping regulations*

Introduction

Biologists use hunting and trapping regulations to manage and conserve wildlife. When an animal population is low or endangered, regulations can be used to protect the species. When an animal population is high, biologists can allow more harvest. If the population of a species is high enough to cause problems, biologists may lengthen the season, raise bag limits, or allow additional methods of harvest so the population can be lowered to an acceptable level.

Hunting and trapping regulations are also used to enhance human health and safety; protect habitat, property, and domestic animals; require the use of selective trapping methods; and meet public expectations for animal welfare.

Most states have a process for setting regulations that allows for public participation. Hunters, trappers, landowners, organizations, and government agencies can participate in the regulation setting process. Michigan's process includes public participation sessions within each Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting. The NRC holds the authority and responsibility for setting game regulations, including trapping, in Michigan.

As a responsible trapper, you must follow all regulations. If you disagree with a regulation, you should participate in the regulation setting process.

Each state has law enforcement officers dedicated to enforcement of hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations. They may be known as wildlife officers, conservation officers, or game wardens. In Michigan they are known as conservation officers. Responsible trappers work with their local wildlife officers and help develop mutual respect for the role each serves in wildlife conservation. When landowners have furbearer control problems conservation officers often refer them to responsible trappers they know and trust.



Andy Turner, MI DNR

Conservation Officers have an important job. Officers strictly enforce trapping regulations. They also help teach trapper education courses and work on nuisance animal complaints.



Identify two specific places to obtain current trapping regulations

Each state wildlife agency publishes a brochure that explains current hunting and trapping regulations. A copy of Michigan's brochure is available electronically at www.michigan.gov/dnr. It is also available at any store that sells Michigan hunting and trapping licenses. You may also obtain the regulations by writing, calling, or visiting a DNR office.

Because trapping regulations may change each year you need to obtain a new copy of the regulations when you renew your trapping license. Remember to obtain a new brochure when you purchase your license. As previously stated, you may also obtain a copy of the Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide at any DNR office or by visiting www.michigan.gov/dnr.

In the space below write down two specific places where you can obtain trapping regulations for Michigan.

In the space below write down the Web site address for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.



Explain the process for setting or changing trapping regulations in Michigan

In the space provided, outline the process used to set trapping regulations in Michigan. Obtain this information from your instructor or from the Michigan DNR.

Flexible trapping regulations allow biologists to use trapping as a tool of wildlife management

It is your responsibility to know the trapping regulations. Ignorance of the law is no excuse if you are charged with a trapping violation.



Silvertip Productions

Trappers work with wildlife agencies to improve regulations

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Ohio DOW Photo

When furbearers are too abundant, biologists can make recommendations to reduce restrictions on trapping

When furbearers are too scarce, biologists can make recommendations to shorten seasons or take other steps to allow the population to increase

Some states require trappers to tag traps with the owner’s name and address



Ohio Dow Photo

Trapping License & Tags



Explain conditions that could lead to changes in trapping regulations

- Furbearer populations rise or fall
- Trapping technology improves
- The number of trappers rises or falls
- Habitat changes
- Nuisance animal problems increase
- Public attitudes change
- Rare or endangered species need protection from furbearers



Demonstrate the use of your current state regulations brochure to find trapping seasons, legal trap types, legal trap sets, and tagging requirements for common furbearers

Choose two common furbearers and use Michigan’s current regulation brochure to fill in the information in the following table.

Furbearer		
Season		
Legal Traps		
Legal Sets		
Tagging Requirements		



Demonstrate the use of Michigan’s regulation brochure to find requirements regarding permission to trap on private property

Requirements regarding permission to trap vary from state to state. A responsible trapper always obtains permission from the landowner.

In the space that follows, write down the trapping permission requirements



for Michigan. Use the Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide to find this information.



Demonstrate use of current state trapping regulations to determine legal restrictions for trapping nuisance animals

State wildlife agencies may authorize landowners or specially licensed trappers to remove nuisance animals that damage crops, livestock, or property. Use Appendix B to find the following information and write it in the space provided:

- Under what conditions can nuisance animals be trapped or removed?
- Who may trap nuisance animals?
- What special licenses or training are required?
- What record keeping and reporting are required?
- What type of fees may be charged?



Ohio DOW Photo

Treat landowners
with respect

Always ask for
permission before trapping on
private land

Try to handle nuisance furbearer
problems during trapping sea-
son when the pelts are prime

Trapping Regulations



FWS Photo

Federal Agent with confiscated furs

Regulations concerning possession of furs during the closed season vary widely. Make certain you know the laws for your state!

Penalties

Fines & Jail time
Loss of Equipment
License Revocation

Public Shame
Criminal Record
Loss of Respect



*Poachers steal
from all of us!*

Report All Poaching (RAP)
TTY - Hearing Impaired 711
(Michigan Relay Center)

Most states have toll-free numbers where you can report violations



State the maximum penalties for trapping out of season, trapping without a license, trapping without permission, and trapping protected animals

Violations of a state's hunting and trapping regulations are criminal offenses. Conservation officers and judges recognize the difference between an unintentional violation and willful intentions to poach animals out of season or by illegal means. Ignorance of hunting and trapping laws is not an excuse. Hunters and trappers are expected to know the regulations and follow them.

Upon conviction of hunting or trapping violations, a judge may impose fines or jail time. Hunters and trappers convicted of serious violations may have traps, firearms, and even vehicles confiscated by the court. Judges can also revoke licenses and suspend a person's privilege to hunt or trap in the future.

Using Michigan's regulation brochure, write down the maximum penalties for violating state trapping laws in the space provided.



Explain the process for reporting wildlife violations

As a trapper, you may learn about hunting or trapping violations that need to be stopped. Never confront a violator or get directly involved without an officer present. Instead, observe the situation and quickly report it to your local conservation officer. Provide descriptions of the violators, vehicles, license plate numbers, locations, and times.

Most states have established programs to stop poaching with toll-free telephone numbers to call when you need to report a violation. These programs go by names such as "RAP" which stands for "Report All Poaching." Many states provide rewards for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of violators. In Michigan, you may qualify for a reward if you furnish information that leads to the arrest and conviction of a person or persons taking, attempting to take, possessing or commercializing in wildlife resources contrary to Michigan or Federal law. Assistance in applying for a reward will be provided by the conservation officer handling your complaint, or assistance may be obtained from one of the Report All Poaching hotline operators. Callers can remain anonymous.

Safety - Animal Welfare - Responsibility - Furbearer Conservation



Write the phone numbers of local wildlife offices and Michigan's RAP program in the space below:

Describe the process for reporting a wildlife violation in the space below:



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Poaching is a crime!

Protect wildlife resources and
the heritage of trapping by
turning in poachers